

Archeological Testing of
Proposed Wayside Exhibits
Booker T. Washington National Monument

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SUMMARY

Booker T. Washington National Monument has proposed installation of wayside exhibits throughout the park. Three of the proposed exhibits were to be installed using cement pads in areas that may have contained archeological resources relating to Booker T. Washington and the Burroughs' occupation of the site (Figure 1). In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended), archeological testing was conducted in those three locations to determine if resources were present. Excavation of one four by four-foot unit and two shovel tests indicated that archeological resources were not present and that installation of the wayside exhibits would have no effect on the National Register properties of the site.

INTRODUCTION

Booker T. Washington National Monument was authorized in 1956 to commemorate the life of Booker T. Washington; "educator and apostle of good will" (70 Stat. 86; P.L.464). Principal historical features of the site are the site of the Burroughs' house which burned in 1950 (MacIntosh 1969:22), the location of a detached kitchen structure reconstructed on the location of the original, and the presumed location of the birthplace cabin. In addition, a tobacco barn has been reconstructed near the presumed location of a historic barn.

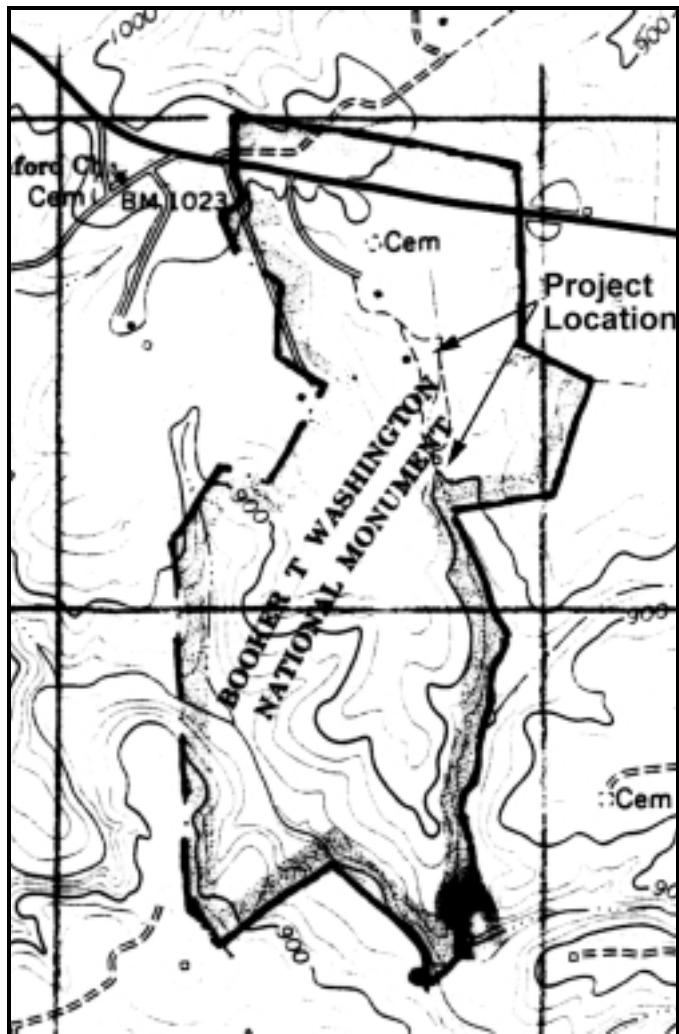


Figure 1: Project Location. Detail from United States Department of the Interior Geological Survey 1:24,000 Series, Moneta SW Quadrangle. 1967.

Previous Research

Archeological testing within the historic area was initially conducted by John W. Griffin in 1959 at the detached kitchen structure. He identified an irregular stone terrace immediately beneath the surface to the east, and a stone chimney base approximately one foot beneath the surface (Griffin 1959). Artifacts associated with these features dated them to the mid-nineteenth century.

In 1985, archeologists from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office of the National Park Service conducted a soil resistivity survey of the historic area (Campana, Douglas V. and Orr, David G.: 1985). The survey identified numerous anomalies, including one (Area D) of low readings near the marked site of the birthplace cabin. A second area of high readings (Area E) was identified near the proposed location of the wayside (Figure 2).

Archeological testing of the anomalies was conducted in 1986 through excavation of 1.5 foot units. Tests 1 and 9 were excavated within the cabin outline and outside of its northwest corner, respectively. Test 1 within the cabin outline, identified four strata; surface to 0.2 feet contained humic topsoil, 0.2 to 1.1 feet contained red fill clay; 1.1 to 1.6 feet contained burnt clay and charcoal with brick fragments, whiteware, bottle glass, and a wire nail, and below 1.6 feet was sterile clay. This test identified the area as potentially the location of a historic structure, possibly the birthplace cabin. Test 1

contained three strata; surface to 0.2 feet contained humic topsoil, 0.2 to 1.0 feet contained mixed soils including charcoal and burned clay, and below 1.0 feet was sterile red clay; no artifacts were recovered. Test 1 indicated that the area immediately outside of the cabin had been disturbed.

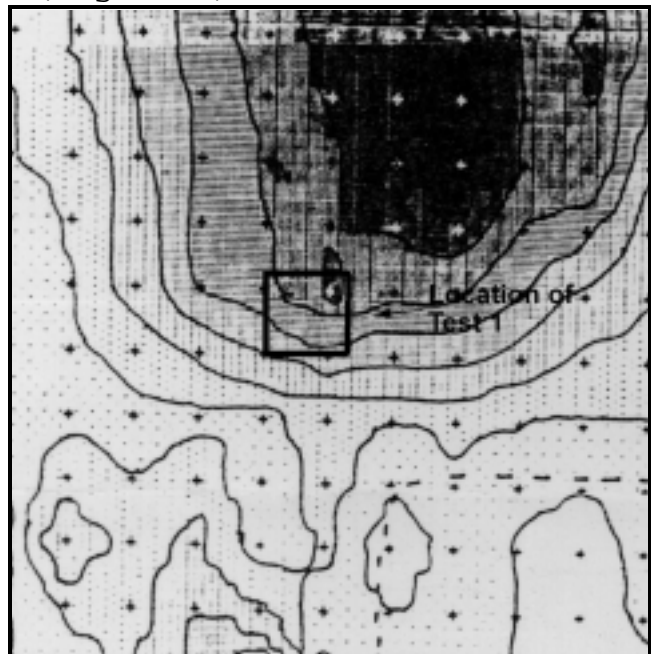


Figure 2: Results of 1986 resistivity survey with location of 1996 Test 1.

In 1996, archeological testing near the reconstructed Tobacco Barn for a fence replacement project did not identify resources in the tested area. Additional projects in 1982 (Fiero) and 1989 (Cooper) did not identify resources associated with the Washington or Burroughs occupation.

Proposed Waysides

Booker T. Washington National Monument proposes to install 10 new waysides to interpret the life and early development of Booker T. Washington throughout the park. Review of the Assessment of Effects (XXX) form by the author resulted in a recommendation of archeological testing at the proposed location of three waysides; one adjacent to the Birthplace Cabin site, and two near the reconstructed Tobacco Barn (Figure 1). The park concurred with this recommendation and the excavations were conducted on June 26 and 27, 1996.

ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Methodology

Archeological investigations were conducted by standard archeological procedure; all tests were of uniform dimension, all soils (except where noted) were screened through one-quarter inch hardware cloth, recovered artifacts were bagged together by provenience, field notes and field maps were maintained by the author during the investigations; soils were recorded using the Munsell soil color system. Elevations were measured from the highest corner of the test unit.

Test 1

Test 1 was excavated at the proposed location of Exhibit 7, northwest of the northwest corner of the outline of the birthplace cabin (Figure 3). Measuring four by four feet, the test had the same dimension as the cement pad proposed to support the wayside. Test 1 had three strata (Figure 4). Stratum 1 extended from the surface to 0.1 feet below surface, consisting of dark yellowish brown (Munsell color 10 YR 4/4) humic loam which represents the root mat of the existing grass ground cover. Stratum 2, extending from 0.1 to 1.0 feet below surface, was defined by dark yellowish brown (Munsell color 10 YR 4/4) dense sandy clay. Because of the density of the deposit and the low frequency of artifacts within, only the northwest quadrant of the unit was screened. Removal of the other three quadrants was effected by use of a mattock. Both the thickness of this unit

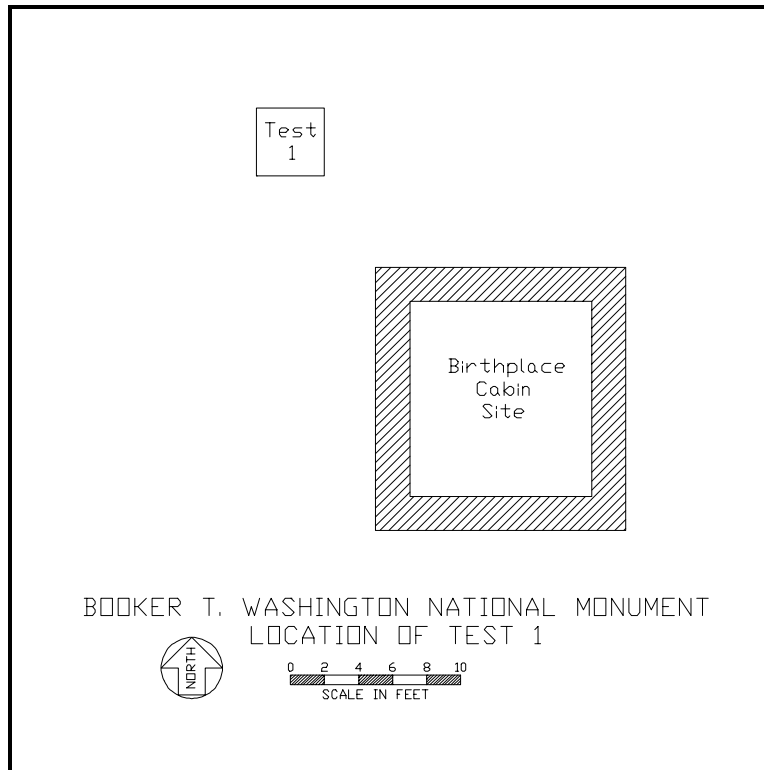


FIGURE 3: Location of Test 1.

and the presence of relatively recent artifacts (including a clear glass fragment) indicate it was created by plowing after the Washington/Burroughs occupation (Figure 5). Stratum 3 is composed of dark yellowish brown (Munsell color 10 YR 4/6) dense sterile clay, appearing at 1.0 feet below surface. Test 1 was located near the 1986 Test 1 and possessed similar stratigraphy.

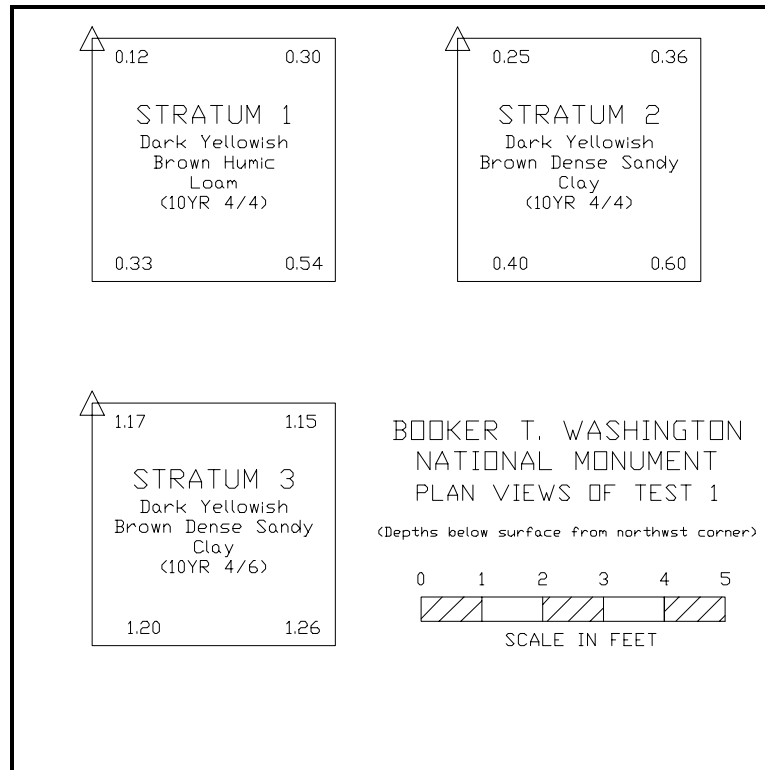


Figure 4: Plan views of Test 1.

This area has unequivocally been compromised by plowing, although the total extent of the disturbance remains to be identified although the area identified in the 1985 resistivity survey as Area E may reflect the plowing disturbance. No archeological resources were identified and the proposed wayside will have no effect.

Test 2

Test 2 was located south of the reconstructed Tobacco Barn at the juncture of the Jack-O-Lantern Branch trail and the park maintenance road (Figure 1) at the proposed location of Exhibit 9. Measuring 1.5 feet in diameter, it contained three strata. Stratum 1 was defined by dark brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/3) humic loam with medium-sized (between 0.1 and 0.3 feet diameter) road material from the surface to 0.2 feet below surface, and represents the developing organic soil. Stratum 2 consists of dark yellowish brown (Munsell color 10 YR 4/4) sandy clay from 0.2 to 0.8 feet below surface. Stratum 3 consists of dark yellowish brown (Munsell color 10 YR 4/6) sandy clay below 0.8 feet (excavation was suspended at 1.1 feet below surface. No artifacts were recovered and no archeological resources were identified.

Test 3

Test 3 was located immediately north of the existing trail sign south of the barn at the proposed location of Exhibit 8. Measuring 1.5 feet in diameter, it has three strata. Stratum 1 was defined by dark brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/3) humic loam and represents the developing topsoil. Stratum 2 consists of dark yellowish brown (Munsell color 10 YR 4/4) sandy clay from 0.2 to 0.6 feet below surface. Stratum 3 consists of dark yellowish brown (Munsell color 10 YR 4/6) sandy clay below 0.6 feet (excavation was suspended at 1.1 feet below surface. No artifacts were recovered and no archeological resources were identified.

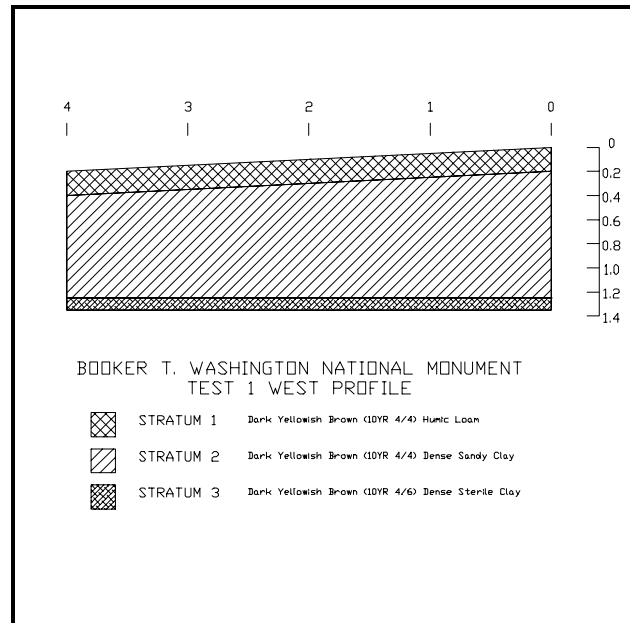


Figure 5: Test 1 west profile.

CONCLUSIONS

Archeological testing of proposed waysides at Booker T. Washington National Monument did not identify any archeological resources that would be effected by the proposed project. Test 1, located near the Birthplace Cabin site indicated that area immediately north of the cabin outline had been plowed. This finding was consistent with adjacent testing conducted in 1986, and may serve to identify the source of the resistivity anomaly identified as Area E. Testing of proposed waysides near the reconstructed Tobacco Barn indicated that except for Stratum 1 in Test 1, the area remains undisturbed. Archeological resources may remain undiscovered in this portion of the park, but installation of the proposed waysides will have no effect.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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